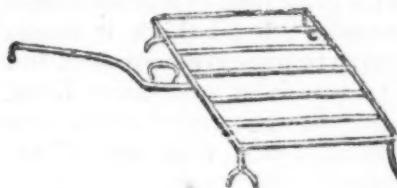


COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. 69.—No. 7.]

LONDON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH, 1830.

[Price 7d.



"Adopt any measure that shall extensively affect the community; let that effect be deeply mischievous, and at once all the admiration of even your generalship is swept away for ever: away goes your name from the corners of the streets, and down comes your picture from the sign-posts."—REGISTER, LETTER TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON, 23d February, 1828.

TO THE READERS OF THE REGISTER.

On the Opening of Parliament.

Barn-Elin Farm, 10th February, 1830.

MY FRIENDS,

THE "Collective Wisdom" has assembled; and as far as one can judge from its proceedings hitherto, there is to be a deadly strife between the landowners, generally speaking, and the Ministry. Before, however, I proceed further, I ought to insert the Speech from the Throne, by which the Parliament was opened.

"*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

"We are commanded by his Majesty to inform you, that his Majesty receives from all Foreign Powers the strongest assurances of their desire to maintain and cultivate the most friendly relations with this country.

"His Majesty has seen with satisfaction that the war between Russia and the Ottoman Porte has been brought to a conclusion.

"The efforts of his Majesty to accomplish the main objects of the Treaty of the 6th July, 1827, have been unremitting.

"His Majesty having recently concerted with his Allies, measures for the pacification and final settlement of Greece, trusts that he shall be enabled, at an early period, to communicate to you the particulars of this arrangement, with such information as may explain the course which his Majesty has pursued throughout the progress of these important transactions.

"His Majesty laments that he is unable to

announce to you the prospect of a reconciliation between the Princes of the House of Braganza.

"His Majesty has not yet deemed it expedient to re-establish upon their ancient footing his Majesty's diplomatic relations with the kingdom of Portugal; but the numerous embarrassments arising from the continued interruptions of these relations, increase his Majesty's desire to effect the termination of so serious an evil.

"*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

"His Majesty has directed the Estimates for the current year to be laid before you. They have been framed with every attention to economy; and it will be satisfactory to you to learn that his Majesty will be enabled to propose a considerable reduction in the amount of the public expenditure, without impairing the efficiency of our naval or military establishments.

"We are commanded by his Majesty to inform you, that although the national income, during the last year, has not attained the full amount at which it had been estimated, the diminution is not such as to cause any doubt as to the future prosperity of the Revenue.

"*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

"His Majesty commands us to acquaint you that his attention has been of late earnestly directed to various important considerations connected with improvements in the general administration of the law.

"His Majesty has directed that measures shall be submitted for your deliberation, of which some are calculated, in the opinion of his Majesty, to facilitate and expedite the course of justice in different parts of the United Kingdom, and others appear to be necessary preliminaries to a revision of the practice and proceedings of the Superior Courts.

"We are commanded to assure you that his Majesty feels confident that you will give your best attention and assistance to subjects of such deep and lasting concern to the well-being of his people.

"His Majesty commands us to inform you that the export in the last year, of British produce and manufactures, has exceeded that of any former year.

"His Majesty laments, that notwithstanding this indication of active commerce, distress should prevail among the agricultural and manufacturing classes in some parts of the United Kingdom.

"It would be most gratifying to the paternal feelings of his Majesty to be enabled to propose for your consideration measures calculated to remove the difficulties of any portion of his subjects, and at the same time compatible with the general and permanent interests of his people.

"It is from a deep solicitude for those inter-

rests that his Majesty is impressed with the necessity of acting with extreme caution in reference to this important subject.

" His Majesty feels assured that you will concur with him in assigning due weight to the effect of unfavourable seasons, and to the operation of other causes which are beyond the reach of legislative control or remedy.

" Above all, his Majesty is convinced that no pressure of temporary difficulty will induce you to relax the determination which you have uniformly manifested, to maintain inviolate the public credit, and thus to uphold the high character and the permanent welfare of the country."

Of all the Speeches from the Throne, delivered within my recollection, none has ever been so timid as this ; and it is curious that such a piece of timidity should have been brought forth under the auspices, and, indeed, should have been the work of the "greatest captain of the age." Just what I predicted has taken place : the landowners, generally speaking, are, you can clearly see by the debates, for a return to the small paper-money ; that is to say, for an issue of assignats, and a declaration of national insolvency. This is the great question. All the other matters that were talked of, are of no importance at all when compared with this. It is clear that the majority of the House of Commons, and of the House of Lords, too, wish for a return to the base paper-money ; and it is equally clear, that the Ministers mean to make their stand against that proposition. LORD STANHOPE's amendment in the House of Lords, and KNATCHBULL's amendment in the House of Commons, were merely intended to show hostility to the Minister ; a mere skirmishing by way of preparation ; but, at the bottom, the meaning was this : " we will drive you from the heavy coin, and make you take again to the base paper-money."

The Duke of Wellington seems to be resolved not to give way upon this point ; and I am very proud of that ; for I have contended all over the country that he could not, and that he would not, give way upon this point. I have said that they might turn him out for any thing that I knew ; but that it was impossible that he should give way. As for his colleagues, I would not answer ; but,

for himself, I have always insisted that it was impossible. We will now, before we go further, hear what he said himself upon this subject. His speech contained a great deal of matter relating to other topics ; but I think it absolutely necessary to preserve here, and to convey to you in a convenient form, all that he said with regard to the *cause of the distress*, and with regard to the currency.

" But the last topic of the noble Earl's speech is the most important of all, although in that respect he has paid but little attention to the recommendation in his Majesty's Speech. In that Speech his Majesty says that " It is from a deep solicitude for the permanent interests of his people " that his Majesty is impressed with " the necessity of acting with extreme caution in reference to the important subject of proposing measures for the relief of any portion of his subjects." But the noble Earl does not attend to this recommendation, nor does he take time to consider the question, but he comes forward at once with a measure of relief, and that measure is of no less consequence than an alteration in the currency. The noble Earl calls on your Lordships to act directly contrary to the advice of his Majesty, and at once to pledge yourselves without inquiry to an alteration in the currency. The noble Earl talks of the Speech from the Throne, as if it manifested a neglect of, and indifference to, the present distressed state of the country. There is no man that can more deeply feel or more sincerely lament these distresses than I do ; and it would be difficult for any man, who should hold the situation which I at present fill, without being well aware of such distresses when they exist, and without deeply and sincerely regretting them. The noble Earl says, that his Majesty in his Speech attributes these distresses to the seasons. But what does his Majesty really say ? He says ' That he feels assured that the two Houses of Parliament will concur with him in assuring due weight to the effect of

"unfavourable seasons, and to the operation of other causes which are beyond the reach of legislative control or remedy.' Surely the noble Earl does not mean to deny that due weight ought to be assigned to those causes, and I cannot conceive how the noble Earl can draw any inference from these words implying an indifference on the part of his Majesty or of his Ministers to the distresses of his subjects. I must now call your Lordships' attention to another most important consideration connected with the distress. There is another class of distress, quite distinct from that already referred to, which really exists to a considerable degree among the manufacturers. But I should like to know whether this has not been caused by the employment of machinery, and the application of steam to various branches of manufacture. Competition, too, has arisen abroad; there is a great desire in all people to become manufacturers, and there are new manufactures established in all the countries of the world. Now I beg leave to ask if the employment of machinery abroad, and the employment of steam to all manufacturing purposes, is not calculated to contribute to the distress of our manufacturers? This is one of the causes referred to by his Majesty in his Speech, and your Lordships must consider whether this is or not one of the causes over which Parliament could not possibly have any control? Can Parliament, my Lords, prevent the competition of foreigners? Can this House interfere to prevent the application of machinery and steam to manufactures? or can there be a doubt that the application of steam and the employment of machinery, with the competition of foreigners, have made it necessary for the manufacturers to give the men they employ as small wages as possible? All these circumstances have combined to produce the distress complained of. The noble Earl opposite says that the distress is general, and universal, and unexampled. I am afraid the distress is general, but at the same time there

are some symptoms in the country which show, notwithstanding the distress, that the country is advancing in prosperity. I say that this is proved by documents. If the exports of Great Britain have gone on increasing for some years; if they were greater last year than any former year; if the amount of our exports are now greater than ever they were before, I say, not only that these are the strongest symptoms of the prosperity of the country increasing, but that the distress cannot be so great and unexampled as the noble Earl would make it. There is not a rail-road, nor a common road, nor a canal in the country, on which the traffic has not increased every year during the last few years, and particularly in the last year. It may be true that there is a diminution of the manufacturers' profits; it may be true that the profits are not so great as they were; but if there were no profit there would be no employment; but the traffic was unexampled, which could not possibly take place unless some advantage were derived from it. It is true that the advantages are not so great as they were ten or twenty years ago, but still there were advantages; and where such an extensive and increasing traffic exists, there cannot be such extreme distress as the noble Earl represents. There is another circumstance well worthy of your Lordships' attention. There is a large class of retail dealers in this country; are they in distress? They fill every town, and almost every village, they are able to pay large rents for fine new houses. I ask if this is a sign of distress? Or is it a sign of distress that they are able to build fine new houses in every part of every town? These are facts, my Lords; and, say what you please, they prove, notwithstanding the distress in some parts of the country, that on the whole the country is still rising in prosperity, and that there are some persons not afflicted with distress. Now, my Lords, I wish to say a few words on the remedies proposed by the noble Earl,

" who seems to have completely mis-
" understood the arguments of my noble
" Friend. The noble Viscount stated
" that the revenue in 1815 was eighty
" millions sterling, that taxes were first
" of all repealed to the amount of eight-
" teen millions, and afterwards to the
" amount of nine millions, making in
" all twenty-seven millions; and he
" says that the revenue now produces
" in a sound currency as great an amount
" as it produced in a depreciated curren-
" cy. Those persons who consume the
" articles which produce the revenue,
" must be able to purchase them, or the
" revenue could not exist. The in-
" crease of the revenue is a proof, then,
" that consumption has increased full
" one-third since the time when the
" taxes were reduced. It is impossible
" that the country in which the revenue,
" in a period of fifteen years, has risen
" one-third, can suffer great distress.
" The noble Earl who spoke last, refer-
" red the distress to a deficient curren-
" cy. He, however, would have a paper
" circulation. Now, I will tell the
" noble Earl that the largest amount
" of currency in circulation at any time
" during the Bank-Restriction Act, was
" sixty-four millions sterling. The Bank
" of England notes were thirty millions;
" country bank paper, twenty-three
" millions; gold, four millions; and
" silver, seven millions. But in 1830
" the amount of Bank of England paper
" in circulation is, 19,900,000*l.*; of
" Country Bank paper, 9,200,000*l.*; of
" gold, 28,000,000*l.*; and of silver,
" 8,000,000*l.*; making a total of
" 65,100,000*l.* It is certain, therefore,
" that there is more money in circula-
" tion now than there was at any period
" of the Bank Restriction. There can
" be no want, therefore, of more cur-
" rency. The noble Earl, indeed,
" says he wants an extended cur-
" rency; but what he in fact wants is
" not an extended currency, but an un-
" limited currency. He would give
" an unlimited power to certain in-
" dividuals, not to the Crown, to
" coin as much money as they please.
" The noble Lord wants to give them
" the power of lending as much capital

" to other individuals as they think pro-
" per. (Hear, hear.) Thus, what the
" noble Earl wants; what I say the
" country cannot have—(cheers)—with-
" out incurring that ruin from which it
" so narrowly escaped in 1825, is an
" unlimited paper currency. The noble
" Earl says, in the West of England a
" man cannot borrow money, though
" his corn-yard and his barns are full.
" The banker will not lend his own
" capital, he says, because he cannot
" make a profit of it; but the banker
" would make a profit by discounting
" bills, with which he is not content,
" and he will not lend because he can-
" not have also the profit of issuing 1*l.*
" notes. What is wanted by these gen-
" tlemen; what the noble Earl would
" vote for to-night; is not more circu-
" lation, but an unlimited circulation.
" He would give a power to indivi-
" duals to make any quantity of money
" they pleased, which they might then
" lend to individuals without any secu-
" rity whatever. There are plenty of
" proofs that there is no want of money
" in the country. Never, at any period,
" was there a greater quantity of capital
" ready to be embarked in any scheme
" whatever. Any man who could set
" on foot a scheme with some plausibi-
" lity, was sure to obtain money to
" carry it into execution. There was
" no power in Europe or America, nei-
" ther Portugal nor Brazil; there was
" no government, however bankrupt;
" which could not get money to borrow
" in England. No man who possessed
" anything like tolerable security, need
" want money. There was never more
" capital ready to be employed than at
" this moment. I am sorry to trouble
" your Lordships at such great length,
" but I thought it necessary to reply to
" the noble Earl's speech. My Lords,
" in answer to all the declarations which
" your Lordships have heard to-night,
" respecting the evils of free trade, of a
" change in the currency, and other
" things, I have one fact to state, and
" it is this: since the year 1815, and
" principally since the Bank Restriction
" was taken off, measures have been
" adopted to relieve the country of taxes,

" to the amount of twenty-seven millions sterling ; and measures have been also adopted to reduce the charge for national debt between three and four millions a-year, that being the interest on nearly a hundred millions sterling. I beg your Lordships will bear this circumstance in mind ; and, let me tell you, that all the advantages of a so-called equitable adjustment, will never equal the advantage already obtained from measures of this description. We have relieved the country, since the Bank-Restriction Act was repealed, of taxes to the amount of nine millions, and of a considerable portion of the charge for the national debt. When I say, We, I do not take this credit on myself ; it is due to the noble Lord on the cross-bench (Lord Bexley), and to the noble Viscount opposite (Lord Goderich) ; but I entreat your Lordships not to deprive the present government, the present administration, of the power of imitating them. We have adopted measures of economy which will hereafter be submitted to your Lordships ; measures for saving every shilling which is not absolutely necessary for the honour and welfare of the country ; and we only desire that the same confidence may be placed in us as was placed in them, that we may be enabled to carry our plans of reform and economy into execution."

Here we have, then, not only the resolution expressed to adhere to the present currency, but his reasons for so adhering. I do not agree with the reasons ; but I applaud the resolution. In the second day's debate the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave his reasons in words rather more full ; and, as his speech was conveniently short, we must have it at full length ; because we shall have to refer to it again and again before this question be "*set at rest for ever*," as sensible CANNING said it was in the year 1819. CANNING, in 1822, said that a reformed Parliament would never have passed PEEL'S BILL ; and that that was one of the reasons why reform would not have been a good thing. The question which was then

set at rest *for ever*, according to this empty-headed bawler, is now the only question worthy of the attention of the public ; and it has now to be settled, indeed. There is a part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech, which I have marked with italics, or, rather, two parts, to which parts I request your particular attention, as they pledged the Ministry not to depart from the present system of the currency.

" The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that when he had yesterday stated that he considered the great object of those who moved the amendment was connected with an alteration of the standard of value, he had been met, on their parts, with the disclaimer of any such intention. He thanked, therefore, the honourable Member who had just taken his seat, for the clear and explicit statement given of his objections to that system, which, after a full consideration of the matter, Parliament had thought proper to adopt. That honourable Gentleman had drawn a fearful picture of what he considered would be the consequences of *an adherence to that system* ; but if Parliament had ever determined to have changed that system, he would indeed have had an opportunity of describing distresses, not only as dreadful, but more real, than those on which he had been recently dilating. Did the honourable Member forget that the system of which he complained had been ten years established ? And could he be ignorant of the fact, that in a community like this, distinguished, perhaps, above all others, for the variety and extent of its engagements and pecuniary transactions, occurring from day to day, could he, in such a community, forbear to see how large a proportion of transactions must have taken place within that period, under the standard which he now proposed to get rid of ? (Hear.) If so, did he not see that that which was perhaps practicable in 1820 or 1821, was utterly impracticable now ? (Hear.) Whatever might be the difficulties and distress occasioned by adhering to the present system, it would not only be

"highly inconvenient but improper for Parliament now to attempt to change it. (Hear, hear.) Did the hon. Member think that if he were now in possession of power, he would ever be able to carry through that House a measure for the reduction of the standard of value? If he ever made the attempt he must do it in the usual way, and the delays which the forms of Parliament would interpose, would offer opportunities for petitions and remonstrances to pour in from all quarters, and there would be such a general mass of confusion that it would be impossible for Parliament to carry the measure of alteration into effect. The hon. Member had denied that the augmented commerce of any particular year afforded any evidence of the prosperity of those engaged in it. He would admit that, in one particular year, commerce might not have been profitably carried on; but was that the first occasion on which the honourable Member had told them that the trade of the country was carried on at a sacrifice by the traders? They had heard that statement at least during the last five or six years from the honourable Member; and though he might be inclined to admit that for one year, or even for two years, such was the fact, he would ask whether it was in the power of any man to deem it possible, that for a regular period of years, individuals would embark in commercial, trading, and manufacturing concerns, in which they could suffer nothing but continual loss? The honourable Member had alluded to the official returns as delusive; but he must have known, if he understood them at all, that the returns were not made on their actual value, which would constantly vary, and could never, therefore, give for a long period an accurate idea of the matter, but upon a standard, which every one at all acquainted with official business perfectly understood, and which gave a just and proper estimate of their increase or decrease during any particular period. Now, the increase for the

last three years had been progressive; and their amount during that which had just expired, was greater than in any of the antecedent years. Surely, this increase could not have proceeded on the sacrifice of the capital of those who were engaged in the trade. The hon. Member encouraged the opinion, that the Government were insensible to the distresses of the country. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) denied the fact; they were as deeply sensible of those distresses as the honourable Member; but they did not think it a good proof of the sympathy they felt, to withdraw the expression of all hope of amendment when they thought that good grounds for that hope still existed. They rather felt it to be more consistent, what the people, who are both rational and sensible, required; to state fairly the opinion they entertained. He reminded honourable Members that, by concurring with the address, they did not pledge themselves to any one mode of proceeding with respect to the distresses or the remedies that might be proposed."

Mr. ATTWOOD, in the second day's debate, insisted that, in spite of the assertions of the Ministers, the *currency of the country must be changed*. Such was the tone of MR. WESTERN, and of several others; and there is not the smallest doubt that a grand trial of strength will take place upon this subject. As a symptom of the prospects of the Duke, nothing appears to me stronger, and more worthy of attention, than the sudden tacking about of "Westminster's Pride and England's Glory." The MARQUIS OF BLANDFORD having introduced the question of Parliamentary Reform, this Baronet seems to have made it an occasion for answering the speech of the DUKE OF WELLINGTON; and, after some introductory matter, he proceeded, according to the *Morning Chronicle*, in the following words, in which, as you will perceive, he deals with the Duke in a manner more unceremonious than any Minister has been spoken of for a long space of time. He calls upon the House of Commons not to give confidence to the

Minister; to resume the confidence which they had bestowed on him; to have confidence in themselves; for that the time was now come when they must do something to save the country. After inserting this speech of the Baronet, which, observe, is a mere specimen of the sentiments of the land-people in general, as far as relates to the Duke, I shall proceed to offer you my opinion with regard to the great question on which the Ministers will be at issue with a large part of the Parliament.

" He felt considerable alarm, indeed, " for the state of the country, when he " considered what had passed in another " place, of which, he believed, they " all had some knowledge; when he " had seen the Prime Minister display, " what, to his mind, was a total insensi- " bility (Hear, hear), and a complete " unacquaintance with the interest of " the country (cheers); with a disposi- " tion not to acknowledge the difficulties " and distress of the country; but, on " the contrary, with a disposition to " stifle all complaint and inquiry, and " persuade the public that the universal " calamity which was felt in every part " of the country (Hear, hear), was only " partial, temporary, and slight; of a " nature to cure itself, and not requiring " the attention of the legislature. He " felt alarm when he knew that this dis- " tress was attributed to improvements " in our machinery, to the application " of steam (Hear, hear), to those other " ingenious contrivances to which all " scientific men justly attributed all the " prosperity of the country; when he " saw that an opinion of that nature " was entertained by the Prime Minister. " (Hear, hear.) Whatever respect he " might have for the Noble Duke's " talents in the field, and no man had " a greater respect, he could form no " other opinion of him as a Minister for " this country, than he himself had form- " ed a short time, a little month, he be- " lieved, before the noble Duke accept- " ed his present situation, when he said " that he should consider himself " destitute of common reason, and fit " only for another place, if he could " entertain the idea of filling the office

" of Prime Minister. The noble Duke " might not then have done justice to " himself; but it was not for him to form " a different opinion of the noble Duke's " qualifications. (Hear, hear.) He would " not then go into the merits of another " question, which the noble Duke had " discussed; a question which pressed on " the consideration of every man, which " was of vital importance, and affected " the interests of all classes, the ques- " tion of the currency (Hear, hear); but " he might, at least, say, that question " could not be got rid of. (Hear, hear.) " Parliament might by its votes negative " whatever propositions might be sub- " mitted to it; but the question of the " currency would press itself on their at- " tention, because the country could not " bear the pressure of the difficulties, " of which it was the cause, which were " said to be temporary, but which had " now continued for 15 years, increasing " every year, and being now greater " than at the beginning. (Hear, hear.) " He was astonished when he knew that " the Government stated that the circu- " lating medium was now greater than " it was at any time of the depreciated " currency. This was an assertion not " to be met by arguments, not by any " statement of facts, but by the assertion " that it was not true, and that it was " impossible that it could be true. (Hear, " hear.) This was borne out by a state- " ment that there were 28 millions of " gold in circulation. He professed " that it seemed to him impossible that " any man at all acquainted with the " subject; any man who had read the " works, in which that question had been " discussed with transcendent ability out " of the House; it was impossible that " any man acquainted with the subject, " could maintain that there were 28 " millions of gold in circulation in this " country. These things showed him " that it was necessary for the House of " Commons not to place too much confi- " dence in the Prime Minister who " could make such statements. They " had long forbore, out of tenderness " to the noble Duke, to scrutinise his " measures, regarding the noble Duke " as the means of conferring the great-

"est benefit on this country which ever a man had conferred, and which he only, of all the men in England, could have carried into effect, producing the greatest amelioration in our situation ; but having done that, the confidence that had been bestowed on the noble Duke must be resumed ; they must have confidence in themselves, for the time was come when many other things must be done. (Hear, hear.) The country could not stand still. Not half a century ago there was no hope of carrying that measure which had now been providentially carried ; he said providentially, considering that it had been brought about by means which surpassed all expectation, and seemed not within the ordinary scope of human means ; but the state of the country had become such, that doing justice could not be longer deferred, and the Government had no other choice than to do justice, or involve the country in civil contention. He gave due credit to the noble Duke that he was sensible to the alteration which had taken place, and that if he should adopt any other measure the Government could not be carried on, unless by means they must all shudder to contemplate. Under these circumstances, satisfied that the House of Commons, which was miscalled the House of Commons, for it was not the house of the commons of England, but a house of representatives of certain peers, contrary to the law, and contrary to the constitution ; a House of Commons in which, of the supposed representatives of the people, eight or nine represented the noble Lord whose son had last night moved the address (Hear, hear) ; a House of Commons, which was stated to be most corrupt, and of which the corruption stared them so much in the face, that they themselves had been obliged to find a remedy ; a corruption, too, which was known all over the country ; of which the whole world was aware ; and the House of Commons knew that all the world knew it ; a House of Commons which would not be long suffered.

"When the people were contending with bold and increasing freedom for their privileges, they would not long submit to a grievance which was the root of all other grievances, and which enabled the Ministers to govern the country by means of this subservient House of Commons ; under these circumstances, and with such a House of Commons, he knew no single subject of equal importance which could come before them. But he hoped, and he implored the noble Lord, assuring him that no man would give him a more sincere support than he would, at a proper time ; that no man was more anxious than he was to bring the subject fairly before them, and therefore he hoped the noble Lord would give him credit for his good intentions, and for having no other wish than to procure for the subject a full consideration ; and not from any motives of personal convenience ; he implored the noble Lord not then to press the subject. He assured the noble Lord that he did not feel himself capable of then doing justice to the subject, and he hoped it would be brought forward at some other time, when he should be able to give it that support he was anxious to give it. The honourable Baronet concluded by again requesting the noble Lord not to press the motion at that time."

Now, the thing which it would be valuable for me to communicate to you, is, a knowledge of *what will be done* with regard to this currency affair. I cannot know, of course ; and I do believe that the Minister himself does not know ; because his majority may abandon him ; and it is a rather general opinion that it will abandon him. The whole nation all except the tax-receivers are in a state of deplorable distress ; but, amongst the merchants, manufacturers and traders, who have any solid property, there is generally an opinion prevailing that ruin still greater would be the consequence of a return to the base paper-money, in which opinion not a few of the country bankers partake. Generally speaking, I know it to be a fact, that the trading part of the com-

munity can see no hope of real relief in a return to the base paper-money, and that they are anxiously looking for relief from a great reduction of the taxes. Those who have any solid property, have debts due to them ; their engagements and their plans have been bottomed upon the supposition of a continuance of the present currency. They saw the ruin of 1825 and 1826, and they naturally dread the return of it. They are, therefore, almost to a man, on the side of the Minister ; and if distress they must still submit to, they would rather submit to it in this shape than go back to the currency of robbery and *panic*.

Not thus is it with the land-people. Theirs is the church ; theirs are the sinecures, pensions, and pay ; theirs are all the emoluments arising from the present system of expenditure. The church, for instance, can lose nothing by a return to the base paper-money ; for it comes when it likes, and takes the tenth of the produce in kind. So it is with the lay impro priators : the rest of the community may be affected in the changes of the value of money : a tradesman's book-debts, for instance, may be reduced to one-half their value ; but the tithe-owner comes and takes his tenth of the produce of the soil, unless you give him money adequate to that tenth, be the value of the money what it may. Then observe, the land-owner has, in five-sixths of the instances, a mortgage on his land. Lowering the value of money, lowers the interest which he has to pay ; while at the same time it lowers in effect the share of interest which he has to pay to the fundholder. Therefore, the landowners and the clergy, who are only another species of landowners, are anxious for a return to the small paper-money ; and the question is, will they be able to effect this *in spite of the Minister* ? I really can offer no decided opinion upon this point ; nor can any of us be able to judge of the matter until we have seen some decided trial of strength in the House of Commons.

It is very certain, that, if there be no return to the base paper-money, and no

reduction of taxation to any great extent, the landowners will soon receive that which they deserve to receive, namely, no rents at all. This is certain ; Mr. ESTCOURT, with the magistrates of Wiltshire at his back, agreed to a petition, the other day, stating that their estates were passing away from under their hands. Dr. BLACK laughed at me, about a year ago, when I said that the grand struggle between the land and the funds was approaching. The Doctor will find that the struggle has come at last. In my leave-taking address, when SIDMOUTH and CASTLEREAGH drove me off to America, I said, "Now, then, I am quite sure that the funding system cannot last long. I know it with little less certainty than I know that winter will follow the next summer. It may last two years, perhaps ; it may last three or four years ; but I defy any measures, any powers, or any events, to save it from destruction, from the end of a few years. The question, therefore, is, not whether the funding system will be destroyed ; nor is it a question whether the boroughmongering system will continue as long as the funding system continues ; for I am convinced that it will, seeing that it appears to be impossible to carry on the funding system any longer without the boroughmongering system ; but the grand and vital question is, whether the boroughmongering system can support itself amidst all the uproar and turmoil of the breaking up of the funding system."

Do we not now behold the struggle ? Do we not now see the boroughmongering system begin to tremble ? Do we not now see men who never before dreamed of parliamentry reform, now anxious to call in the people to assist them in shaking off the deadly load of the Debt ?

However, the great majority of the landowners are for suffering all to remain in its present form ; to leave every thing wearing its present outward appearance, and for shaking off the load quietly, while they retain as much as possible of the emoluments which they themselves derive from the taxes. They

dare not face an *equitable adjustment*: they would, therefore, change the value of money; reduce the Debt and mortgages in that way; and would, unseen, as it were, get their rents and be able to live on without that open breach which would inevitably produce a reform of the Commons' House of Parliament. By adhering to the present currency, we shall be brought either to a vast reduction of the taxes, and to an equitable adjustment, or to a blowing-up of the whole system. The scheme of the landowners could last only for a while; and it must end in a convulsive revolution.

But, with regard to the constitutionality of opposition to the Ministers upon this ground, I am disposed to ask, what *right* the Parliament has to interfere with the King in the exercise of his great prerogative in the making and issuing of money? This is a prerogative exclusively belonging to the crown: as such it has been exercised in all times: to appoint certain persons, bankers or others, to issue money to be current amongst the King's subjects, is clearly an invasion of the King's undoubted right. What is so vital as money; what so necessary to the safety of the people as to have this money of fixed and determinate value? To imitate the King's coin is treason; and surely the current money ought to proceed from no other source; no individual, and no body of individuals, ought to have the power of making money; and such never was the case in any well regulated or well ordered state in the world. The Parliament, it appears to me, can have no right to set aside the coin of the King, or, by any contrivance, to render it of less than its real, intrinsic, and accustomed value.

It may be asked, then, what is the Parliament to do under circumstances like the present, when the money has been made double in value to what it was some time ago, and when the amount of the taxes and salaries and expenditure of every sort had been, in fact, doubled? Why, the proper office of the Parliament, is, TO REDUCE THE TAXES; to refuse to grant taxes;

to withhold the payment of taxes; to repeal taxes, until the amount of the taxes be as low as the necessity of the case shall require. This is the proper office of the Parliament. It finds the nation plunged into distress; it says that this distress arises from a change in the value of the money, which has more than doubled the amount of the taxes; but he finds the King's coin in circulation; he finds the money to be of its ancient value; but it finds the burden too heavy for the people; therefore why not reduce the weight of the burden? What has the Parliament to do in providing for the expenditure? it is for the King and his Ministers to look to that matter; it is for them to frame establishments agreeably to the means put into their hands by the Parliament; and it is for the Parliament to take care that the people be not over-burdened; to take care that they be not plunged into distress and starvation by the monstrous burden of the taxes.

Therefore, the Duke of Wellington will be supported by every good man in the country in his resistance of all attempts to debase the King's coin or to let loose a band of usurpers of the King's prerogative of making money. But if the Parliament, confining itself to its proper province, proceed to the reduction of taxes; if they listen to the prayers of the counties and towns and parishes, and begin by abolishing the tax upon malt, and let the currency alone; and if the Duke opposed such abolition, then, indeed, he would be to blame. There he stands receiving the taxes such as they are; and if the Parliament continue to put the same sum of taxes into his hands, how is he to blame if he continue to expend it? It is not for him to propose the reduction of taxes: it is for the guardians of the public purse, to propose such reduction; and it is for them, too, to propose that equitable adjustment of contracts which their divers acts have now rendered so necessary. All this is so plain, so obvious is the duty of the Parliament, that one wonders how they can amuse themselves with childish schemes about the currency. We have got the King's coin:

we have got it at last: prices will accommodate themselves to the quantity of money in the country: the people are in the depth of misery: commotion is staring us in the face, owing to the hunger of the people; and all the world knows that this arises from the over-burden of the taxes. What, therefore, has the Parliament to do but to reduce those taxes, and to let the King's coin remain that which it was for so many ages.

As a specimen of the state of the country, I take the following article from the *Windsor Express*, copied into one of the London papers. "On Wednesday last the village of North Marston was thrown into a state of great agitation, in consequence of a disturbance amongst the labouring poor, arising, it is said, out of the following circumstance:—One of the overseers was paying the poor at his house, when a young lad called for his allowance, amounting to three shillings. The overseer refused to pay him more than two shillings and three-pence. The pauper, however, refused to leave the house unless he was paid the remainder. An attempt was then made to turn him out, when some of the men interfered, and the constable, being present, eventually took four of them into custody. This proceeding aroused the indignation of the poor of the village, who, being joined by a number of the poor from the adjoining parish of Oving, declared that the men in custody should not be taken to prison unless they were all taken there. Such was the threatening aspect of affairs, that the other overseer, Mr. Kingham, fled for safety, under the apprehension of his life being in danger. *Fifty of them, armed with sticks,* proceeded to the house of a magistrate in the neighbourhood, the Rev. Mr. Archer, of Whitchurch. Lord Nugent (who is highly respected by the poor of the neighbourhood) being at his seat at Lilies, about two miles distant, proceeded to Whitchurch, accompanied by his brother-in-law, Captain Poulett, who, in conjunction with Mr. Archer, investigated the

"case; and, after hearing the different statements, they discharged the men, considering that both parties were to blame. They further conciliated the poor, by assuring them that justice should be done in attending to their complaints, and advised them to return peaceably to their homes, which advice was instantly complied with. This prudent step taken by the worthy magistrates, it is believed, was the means of preventing much evil, as, from the excited state of feeling which prevailed among the assembled poor, had a different line of conduct been pursued towards them, it is more than probable that consequences of the most serious nature would have ensued. At Aylesbury, Lord Nugent has suggested the propriety, as a temporary expedient of farmers paying a portion of their rates in corn, and of paying, with the consent of the receiver, a part of his allowance in produce instead of money; the poor may thus get a third more, and the farmer finds a customer at home; which would be easier to the latter than paying in money."

This is the fearful object to contemplate! and this is precisely what I warned the DUKE OF WELLINGTON of on the 1st of March, 1828, soon after he came into office. My words were these, "My Lord Duke, the history of the two nations furnishes sufficient proof that the English are not to be expected to starve quietly; merely because the House of Commons has obtained proof that the Irish so starve. There may be, and there are, some instances in which innocent and industrious individuals who have, of late years, been starved to death in England; but these instances are partial; they are very few in number compared with the whole number of the people. Never will you see a whole parish of the people of England quietly yield up their breath under the pangs of hunger. They will have food, by one means or another; and if the bill, which the newspapers ascribed to Mr. SLANEY, and which was described as taking relief away from all persons

" able to work ; if this bill were passed
 " to-morrow, that which is now, that
 " scanty portion which assistant-over-
 " seers and select vestries and contrac-
 " tors for the keeping of poor-houses ;
 " if this scanty portion of relief which
 " is now extracted from these, were
 " withheld ; the next day, double the
 " amount of it would be taken by acts
 " which are denominated thefts. And,
 " where are the means of suppressing
 " these thefts ? We are not here talk-
 " ing of robbers and thieves, who rob
 " and thieve for gain or idleness : we
 " are not talking of the exception, but
 " of the rule ; we are not talking of the
 " few, but of the many : not of the hun-
 " dreds, but of the millions. It is not
 " here a factious party, or an insurrec-
 " tion to be suppressed : it is the great
 " mass of the people ; and, my Lord
 " Duke, we are manifestly approaching
 " very fast towards that state of things
 " which is a great deal more perilous
 " than a civil war, though that is peril-
 " ous enough.

The above account is from Buckinghamshire, which is only a strong instance of what is going on all over the country. Almost every where the farmers are unable to pay the rates in sufficient amount to feed the poverty-stricken labourers ; but these latter will be fed. They regard a supply of food as *their right*, and they *justly so regard it*. The poor receive only *six millions* of taxes in relief ; and while sixty millions of taxes are collected by the Government, surely a part of this might be deducted in order to add to the relief of the poor. It is a fact, enough to astound the world, that the money paid for *collecting and managing* the taxes ; the money swallowed up by the tax-gatherers themselves, *amounts to as much as is expended in the relief of all the poor !*

This is the matter for the House of Commons to take hold of : to meddle with this matter is their proper province : yet, not a word do we ever hear upon the subject from the lips of any one of the members. As to the working people themselves, they see not the real cause of their misery. Nature and rea-

son bid them look for sustenance to the land which they till. They see nobody but the farmer interposing between them and what they deem their fair share of the food : on the farmer, therefore, they fall as their enemy. The farmer looks to his landlord in vain ; and thus these parties are left to carry on the deadly strife with each other.

LORD NUGENT's scheme for enabling the farmers to pay the poor-rates *in kind*, while it shows the inexpressible poverty of the latter, is well calculated to keep up in the people a correct idea of *their right to a share of the produce* ; and to produce, in their minds, a series of calculations with regard to the extent of that share. There needed only this one fact to prove to every man of any reason, the wretched situation of the country, the immediate cause of which wretchedness is the arbitrary change which has been made in the value of money. This last change was made by the bill of 1826 ; and how often have I had to repeat the memorable words of my petition, presented to the House while that bill was lying before it and not yet passed, namely, " Your petitioner knows as well as he knows that fire burns, that if your honourable House shall pass that bill without reducing the taxes to the amount at which they were before the small paper-money was put out, you will reduce the people of this country to a state of distress absolutely insupportable." Now, then, are not the words of this petition verified ? Is not the state of distress absolutely insupportable ? Upon turning to the petition since I wrote the last sentence, I find the exact words to have been these : " That, in the above-mentioned bill, your humble petitioner sees a design to cause gold and silver to be the circulating money of England ; that he knows, as well as he knows that fire burns, that if gold and silver be the circulating money of England, more than half the present amount of taxes cannot be levied, without producing ruin and wretchedness absolutely insupportable ; and that, therefore, he most humbly, but most earnestly,

"prays your honourable House to reduce the taxes to an amount not exceeding that which was their amount before the small paper-money supplied the coin of his Majesty."

Such was my prayer when this bill was passed. The ruin and the wretchedness are come, and they are absolutely insupportable. Insolvencies, bankruptcies, suicides, battles in villages between overseers and paupers; insubordination every where; such a state of things never witnessed before in any country upon earth; all produced by acts of the Parliament; and the Parliament fully warned beforehand of the danger of passing every one of those acts. There is no remedy but in the taking off of the taxes; and it is my decided opinion that this remedy, to any thing like an efficient extent, will not be adopted by the Parliament.

People of property, farmers, traders, every body, that have pecuniary engagements or dealings, are full of anxiety as to what will be done. In my last Register, I took particular pains to point out all the consequences of a return to the base paper-money. A great majority of the people of property engaged in trade, abhor the thought of such return: nobody but insolvents, or hair-brained speculators; nobody but men mortgaged up to their eyes, or sharing largely in the emoluments of the system, wish for a return to that gambling and swindling system. GOULBOURN, taking directly from the last Register, is right for once; and the DUKE is as strong as Hercules if he stand on the basis of the King's coin. Indeed, it is impossible for him to retract without covering himself with everlasting shame. If the Parliament, on the contrary, abandon the silly project of a return to the base paper-money, and insist on a reduction of the taxes, they will have all the country with them; but this I think they will not do. The chances are, therefore, that *nothing efficient will be done*; that we shall go drawing on from bad to worse, till, at last, my old and thousand-times repeated prophecy will be verified, and that the whole of the paper-system, "amidst the war of opi-

"nions of projects, of interests, and of passions, will go to pieces like a ship upon the rocks."

Before the publication of the next Register, we may be able to discover the designs, and the probable powers of the parties engaged in this struggle. At any rate, there can be no harm in *getting gold*. I observed, in the last Register, that if the base paper-money were again resorted to, the banks must all be protected against demands for gold; and that, therefore, the thing must be done by order in Council, and must come upon us like a thief in the night; for that, if done by act of Parliament, the forms of the House would give so much time for runs, that there would not be a single sovereign left in any bank, and that all would be confusion even before the bill were passed. Now, it is very material to observe, that if the Parliament beat the Minister, and carry this measure in despite of him, the Parliament must proceed by *bill*, and not by order in Council; let every one observe this well. MR. GOULBOURN seems to have hit upon this nail very neatly. In his answer to MR. ATTWOOD, he said that the delays which the form of Parliament would interpose, would create such a mass of confusion, that it would be *impossible for Parliament to carry the measure of alteration into effect*. This, without irony, was sensible, GOULBOURN. So that, before such a measure can be adopted, the DUKE must be turned out; a new Ministry must be formed; and they may proceed with their order in Council; but, even this would be very difficult work; for, if the DUKE were ousted, the intention for ousting him would be known; and the vote which would compel him to retire, would be a signal for a general run upon the banks. The DUKE, therefore, is strong upon this ground still; and he is weak only in case of an attack upon the taxes. He is happily bound to the King's coin: bound, it is fair to believe, from a sense of duty; but he is bound and doubly bound by his own safety; by his own tenure of place; for, observe, if he be turned out by a vote of Parliament, he sinks for ever in the estimation of Eng-

land and of Europe too : he has to make a stand for his fame : make a stand he certainly will ; and, if he make it on the ground of the currency, he ought to be triumphant.

If I were in the DUKE's place now, if I had been in his place in the month of January 1828, if the King had accepted of my offer at that time, there would, at this day, have been no distress in England. I would, long ago, have put in force the equitable adjustment as prayed for in the Norfolk Petition. All would have been tranquillity and harmony at home ; the French would have been out of Cadiz, and the Russians would not have been in Turkey : LORD NUGENT would not have had to propose the payment of poor-rates in kind, and the workmen of Huddersfield would not be living upon two-pence halfpenny a day. The tax-eaters would, indeed, have ceased to revel while the labourers were starving, but WILMOT HORTON, would have been spared the trouble of projecting a mortgage on the poor-rates, in order to thin the population of the country. But if I were in the situation in which the Duke is now, this is what I would do : I would stick to the coin of the King ; I would give no countenance to paper-money of any description, not even to the ingenious Wm. MABERLY ; I would countenance the Parliament in the reducing of taxes ; but if they got the small paper-money, they should get it by bill ; and, if by that bill they blew the system up, it should be their own work. I would object to no reduction of taxes ; I would pay the dividends as far as I could with the taxes that were left me ; I would propose Parliamentary reform, I would follow with my equitable adjustment, holding the Norfolk Petition in my hand ; I would *keep my place*, and would have, as I should deserve, the blessings of the country. I must not dismiss this address to you, my friends, without a word or two more on the project of Mr. Maberly ; namely, putting out exchequer bills to the amount of four or five millions, so low as for *one pound*, making these bills a legal tender in all respects whatsoever. This would be a

barefaced issue of assignats. The things could not circulate while the Bank was open for payment in gold. It would be a bare-faced government paper-money, and would very soon blow the whole system up. The very proposition proves that there is no rational hope of saving this system : a man could not have thought of such a thing until every rational means had been viewed with despair. Ah ! the THING is driven up into a corner at last : after all its shuffles and all its tricks, I have it now safe in the corner : it has been trying to push by me several times ; but, at last, I have it safe ; it has only just room to turn its body about ; and, in a very few months, I shall have it safe by the head, and shall lead it to my shop and dose it as easily as a nurse doses a child.

That you, my friends, will rejoice with me upon this occasion, I am certain. We can remember the time when this insolent thing shook the halter in our faces, and rattled in our ears the keys of the dungeon. One of my objects in my tour to the North, was, to see, and to exult in company with, those who had so long been suffering in common with me. Let us now wait : let us see the next move that the THING will make, and be you assured, in the meanwhile, that it can make no move which will not be to its own discomfiture and to our honour.

I remain, my friends,
your faithful and obedient Servant,
W.M. COBBETT.

NORTHERN TOUR.

ON Monday, the 1st of February, I delivered the third lecture at Sheffield ; and, on Tuesday morning, or rather, noon, set off for Nottingham through Chesterfield and Mansfield, carrying with me the most grateful recollection of the very kind treatment which I received at Sheffield ; and my son and daughter not forgetting the beautiful sight which they had beheld in those exhibitions, called the show-rooms, in that place of wonderful ingenuity and

industry. The weather was very severe when we left Sheffield, and we saw the poor partridges in the fields very hard pushed for any thing to support life. I saw one covey amongst a flock of sheep, living upon the seeds of the hay which had been given to the latter. The sheep themselves do not mind cold and snow if they have food, but, in many places, they were scraping the snow in order to get at the grass. They are of the Leicester breed, and, in spite of the weather, seem to look very well.

As we proceeded on towards Nottingham, we found the country more a farming country, with large barns and ricks about them; and, until we came to Sherwood Forest, it seemed, as far as we could judge, to be a country rather fertile than otherwise. We arrived at Nottingham about six o'clock on Tuesday evening, and found a committee of gentlemen ready to receive us, and to give us an invitation to a public breakfast to be held the next morning at nine o'clock, in the Thurland Hall, which is said to have been the banqueting-room of King Charles the First, and which, in some sharing of the good things of this country, fell to the lot of the fortunate Duke of Newcastle, who is also, it seems, the present owner of a fine tract, called Nottingham Park, and of other formerly crown property in and about this ancient and beautiful town. The breakfast took place at nine o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, the 3d of February. There were present not much short of two hundred gentlemen; and this, never having seen one of the parties before in my life to my knowledge, except two gentlemen from Derby and one from Manchester, I felt to be the greatest honour that I had ever received in the whole course of my life. Here was no personal attachment at work; for none of the parties had ever seen me that I knew of: it was purely the respect shown by this number of sensible and well-educated men, not to me personally, but to those exertions for which I had endured twenty long years of calumnies from all the bribed and base reptiles of the country.

I felt the full weight of this upon my mind, when I rose to say a few words in the way of thanks for the honour conferred upon me; in those few words, I observed that the mere getting upon the table was enough; that they, the company, were too well instructed to need instruction from me; that my business there was to show them the man that had so long fought, and at last overcome, the hydra of stupidity and oppression; and that their business there was to join me in rejoicing upon the occasion. The breakfast itself, upon any occasion, would not have been of much value to the far greater part of us; but it was, in all respects, worthy of the donors, worthy of the town, which, in almost all respects that I can mention, exceeds all the towns that I ever saw in my life. A fine, most extensive and most beautiful market-place; lofty, strong, and neat buildings; elegant shops, clean-dressed people, active and intelligent men, and sprightly and beautiful women. The environs of the town are as fine as the town itself. Open on all sides; fine prospects; the town itself presents great inequality of hill and dale; and all this without any of that beggarly, any of that squalid misery, which to me has been the great drawback in the merits of so many other places. As to my own treatment, and that of the members of my family who were with me, it would be invidious to make distinctions, in a case where the kindness, the hospitality and generosity have been uniform; but, at Nottingham we had more leisure, the tour being, in some sort, at an end; and the attentions which we received were in proportion to that leisure; and excited in a particular manner, perhaps, by the hoarseness which I still retain from my cold caught in Yorkshire, and which seemed to require more than ordinary attention. Where there are so many persons to whom so many acknowledgments are due from me and my family, I am restrained from naming any; but every one will be well assured that his or her kindness to me and my sons and daughter, have been duly appreciated, and will never be forgotten. After three lectures

on the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights, we prepared to quit Nottingham for Leicester; but, before we came off, it being Saturday, and the market day morning, a gentleman took me to see the meat market, which was the finest, with regard to the quality of the meat, its cutting-up, its cleanliness and every other thing belonging to it, that I had ever seen in my life. This is a matter of which I am a very competent judge, having seen the London markets and that of Philadelphia, and being a great connoisseur with regard to the article of meat. I saw here a greater number of fine sirloins of beef than I had ever seen in any one market before. After I got back to the inn, I hankered after one of these sirloins of beef, went back, had it sewed up in cloths, and brought it to London. It was not of the largest size; but with the third part of the suet left in, it weighed 61lbs. and was whiter and fatter than any one of the same size that I ever saw before. The butchers told me that the oxen were bought in Lincolnshire, and that a great part of the sirloins had that morning been sent off to London sewed up in cloths. I have always sought for this Lincolnshire beef in Newgate market. It comes sewed up in cloths, the rump and sirloin in one piece.

We got to Leicester, through very rough weather, on Saturday evening, 6th of February, and I intended to give a lecture in a work-room which had been prepared for the purpose; but we had omitted to write from Nottingham, and, owing to that omission, no notice of the lecture had been given. Our friends wanted us to stop until Monday; but my appointments at home rendered that impossible.

On Sunday morning, the 7th of February, we found that a thaw had come in the night; and when we got to Birchill, where we slept on Sunday, we found there had been a heavy rain. On Monday morning, we set off for Kensington, finding less and less snow as we approached London; and when I got to Barn-Elm, which I did before it was dark, scarcely a bit of snow was to

be seen; so that, during the fifty-three days of my absence, the frost and snow lasted all but the last day; thus terminated a journey of 667 miles, during which I made *seven and twenty speeches*, occupying, in the whole, about *sixty-one hours*, and returning on the very day that the frost broke up, and made it, in some measure, necessary that I should be again at home.

TO THE FARMERS.

Barn-Elm Farm, 11th February, 1830.

BROTHER SUFFERERS,

I HAVE been to condole with the sons of cotton, woollen, iron and steel; and now I will go and condole *with you*, my dear brethren of the earth. I intend to deliver a lecture in London, on Thursday, the 18th instant; and then to set off for *Norwich*, to lecture there. I shall see, in my way, what is doing at *Bury St. Edmund's*. In the mean while I shall be glad *to hear from any friend at either of those places*, relative to a proper place to lecture in. The sooner such friends have the goodness to write, the better. After Norfolk and Suffolk, I shall take *Kent* and *Sussex*.

Comfort yourselves, dear brethren, as well as you can; for, be assured, that you will never see the pretty *little notes* again.

W.M. COBBETT.

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